

to feel anxious or depressed or to be described by their teachers as hyperactive or disruptive, than those who continued not to eat breakfast. Both regular and new members of the breakfast club were also less likely to play truant or be late for school. On the strength of these results, 20 schools in Maryland are now introducing free breakfasts for all.

Of course, without depriving some children of the breakfasts they were already eating—an ethically dubious experiment—it is hard to separate cause and effect. It may be that children who are not late are more likely to eat breakfast anyway; skipping school presumably translates into skipping breakfast too. This, more than eating breakfast *per se* could account for the improvements in grades.

But it may not matter whether eating breakfast improves mood and performance directly through its nutritional effect—or indirectly, simply by getting more pupils to arrive at school on time. Breakfast is no panacea, but it may be a cost-effective way to help the children who most need help. In America's inner cities, between one-third and two-thirds of children go hungry at least some of the time. Besides this, they frequently have to cope with difficult family circumstances and other severe problems. Learning is low on their list of priorities. Yet learning is perhaps their only real ticket to a better life.

If by eating breakfast children do better, feel happier and find it easier to learn, then increasing the take-up of school breakfasts by making them free for all is surely a good idea. Bring on the buttered toast.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, The Economist notes that:

The researchers found that kids who started eating significantly more breakfast . . . were doing better at school, particularly in mathematics. This result confirms earlier studies on the benefits of breakfasting on academic performance. But Dr. Murphy and his colleagues also found that those children who started eating more breakfast were significantly less likely to feel anxious or depressed, or to be described by their teachers as hyperactive or disruptive . . . less likely to play truant or be late for school. . . . Breakfast is no panacea, but it may be a cost-effective way to help children who most need help.

And so the provision of the Johnson school breakfast amendment, in our overall nutrition authorization, will build on already-existing research in individual school districts around the country and create a more comprehensive research strategy. But I believe that the facts that will be found are already apparent to us in the smaller research studies that have already been conducted.

It is my hope that we will be able to build further on this information and this broader research from this larger pilot program contained in this legislation, to what ultimately will be a universal free breakfast program for all schoolchildren throughout the Nation. I think the research already is very apparent that this could be a very cost-effective, efficient way of enhancing academic performance and minimizing behavioral difficulties throughout all the schools in the United States. Obviously, this program would be constructed, as I envisioned, on a voluntary basis, from school district to

school district, so there is no federalization or mandate. Yet, there is an opportunity for a constructive partnership to exist between the Federal Government and its nutrition programs and our individual school districts.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S FARM RELIEF PACKAGE

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I wish to touch on the status of agricultural disaster legislation this morning, which is pending in both the Senate and in the other body.

As many know, for the last several months the northern plains—in particular including my home State of South Dakota—have suffered through an extraordinarily difficult time in the agricultural sector. We face extremely low prices in both the grain and the livestock side of agriculture. Many parts of the northern plains as well have suffered from grain disease, as well as flooding and other natural calamities that have further caused extreme stress on agricultural producers in general. Now we find prices at remarkably low levels.

I received a report just recently from Winner, SD, indicating that corn there was bringing only \$1.10 a bushel, and wheat in Alpena, SD, was bringing in around \$2. Cattle in our State, as they are throughout much of the country, are bringing in the mid-\$50 range. This represents a loss for each animal raised by our producers, and it creates a situation where hedging those losses with profitability in the grain sector is not possible either. It is a double-barreled hit. It is one that is unique—one that is not common. Even though we all understand that there are cycles of price in both the grain and livestock sector, for them to both be at the calamitously low level, complicated by further natural disasters at the same time, is just simply wreaking havoc across much of rural America and the United States.

My farm State colleagues and I have twice brought up our legislative response. We have, frankly, had mixed success on the floor of this body and in Congress in general. The economic relief package that we earlier offered would have provided a lift in the caps on marketing loan rates and an extension of terms of those loans from 9 to 15 months, a strategy that I believe is the most effective strategy that has been debated on this floor relative to addressing the problem of grain prices.

There is much that we can do in terms of disaster relief, and much of that is fine and good. But I think anyone who doesn't understand that the crisis we face both in livestock and grain is reflective of price simply doesn't get it. While disaster relief will tide some people over and address the cash flow problems that they face now over a short term, this body needs to be addressing the long-term problem of price in grain and livestock. And anything that doesn't do that is simply

buying us time for yet another calamity to come down the road sometime soon.

A second provision in our package that provided disaster indemnity to assist producers who suffered from multiyear disasters—natural and otherwise—is a provision to provide market transparency through mandatory price reporting of livestock sales and mandatory labeling of beef and lamb products for their country of origin. We were successful in incorporating several of these provisions into the agricultural appropriations bill when it was considered on the floor of the Senate. The one measure that we were not successful with, unfortunately, was the lifting of caps and the extension of the marketing loan rates on grain. We have twice now voted on that marketing loan provision, and twice we have been defeated.

The Senate passed a \$500 million indemnity program which, as is now agreed on by everyone essentially, is inadequate given the scope of the losses that have taken place, not just on the northern plains but in Texas, Louisiana, and other parts of the country that have suffered from the dire drought circumstance.

This legislation now is tied up in conference committee. It is my hope that we will see sufficient bipartisanship and statesmanship on the part of the conferees that a final product will return to the House and Senate that will, in fact, be constructive. In the meantime, however, released this weekend and announced this morning is an initiative promoted by the administration that I think this body and the conferees need to look at with the greatest care.

I applaud my colleague, Senator DASCHLE, in particular, for his unstinting work on the agriculture crisis problem and for his work with the administration to promote yet another constructive, positive approach to the kind of prices we face. Senator DASCHLE, who could well have been in our home State campaigning in his own reelection campaign, chose instead to remain here working around the clock and through the weekend with the administration, with our colleagues on the Senate Agriculture Committee, with both political parties, trying to see what we could do to augment the relief that had earlier been discussed and which had partially been passed by the Senate.

I again applaud Senator DASCHLE's extraordinary leadership, his willingness to stick with the real business of getting this legislation into shape, for getting it to the floor of the Senate, and for working with the administration to make sure that it has both congressional and administration support.

This relief package would come to slightly over \$7 billion for 1 year. It would involve, again, uncapping of the

marketing loan rate, which I have discussed and which I think we need to revisit, as the single best strategy available to us to address the issue of inadequate prices in the grain sector. It would lift these caps and extend the loan terms from 9 to 15 months. I think it would have an enormously positive economic impact all across rural America.

Second, it would tie our relief to production agriculture, which I think is important.

There is an alternative disaster package being talked about currently that would amount to augmenting the transition payments for producers—actually not the producers so much as it would be for landowners.

I applaud all efforts to go forward. I am not going to make the perfect the enemy of the good. I think there is urgency here that is critical. We need to proceed in an expeditious fashion as much as possible. I understand it may involve some give and take and will involve some of each side's strategy. But when I look at what the uncapping of the loan rates would do, even at this modest level, it is clear to me that it is a superior alternative.

The wheat price, which is currently capped at \$2.58 per bushel under the Democratic plan, goes to \$3.22. That is up 64 cents per bushel. That is under the Democratic plan and the plan proposed by the Clinton administration.

The alternative to that through the AMTA payments, if you were to equate it on a per bushel basis, would be not a 64-cent increase but a 23-cent increase.

On corn, the current cap is at \$1.89. The Democratic proposal would increase that to \$2.25, up 36 cents. The alternative through the AMTA payment increase would equate to about a 10-cent increase rather than a 36-cent increase.

The soybean cap would be increased modestly—from \$5.26 per bushel to \$5.33 a bushel, up 7 cents. But under the alternative AMTA approach, soybean producers would stand a chance of getting nothing if their soybeans were not planted on former base acreages.

The AMTA augmentation also suffers from the problem of what to do about renters. Some 43 percent of the crops being grown in America are being grown by farmers on rented land. It has been our experience in the past that if we do the AMTA payment approach, there may be a great many instances where the money will go exclusively to the landowner but nothing to the farmer who actually is growing the crop.

The Freedom to Farm legislation touted in the 1996 farm bill delivered planting and management flexibility to farmers. They have been able to take care of that flexibility. I think that has been positive. It has been a positive step in the right direction. I applaud that. No one is suggesting that we back up and retreat from that level of flexibility, that we back into some sort of micromanaged world out of Washington.

But the fact is when Freedom to Farm passed, wheat prices were nearly \$6; not gaining—around \$2 in many parts of the country. Corn was in the \$3 range. It is far less than that; it is in the \$1 range now.

Circumstances have changed. Many of us would say, "I told you so." There is a certain amount of foreseeability that those prices were not going to stay at that high level in perpetuity. Now we find that with Freedom to Farm, although it contains some positive things, it is, frankly, grossly inadequate in terms of providing the safety net, providing some kind of stability for family producers.

Now we find that declining transition payments and then ultimately a pat on the back and a "good luck," reducing America's commitment to family agriculture from \$26 billion at a high water mark over a decade ago to \$5 billion and ultimately to nothing, while our European allies spend \$50 billion to sustain agriculture there, because they know what it is like to be hungry, puts U.S. producers at an incredible disadvantage.

It is my hope, again, that we will find the bipartisan will to deal with this in an urgent manner in the coming week or two of this Congress. The administration and the Democratic proposal, on top of these past efforts at meat labeling, price transparency, disaster payments and raising the marketing loan cap—which, by the way, is a marketing loan and not the kind of loan that results in massive grain buildup in supplies and inventory we suffered under in previous years—this disaster package also includes significant funds for Farm Service Administration operating loans for producers who have been hit by a disaster, for land compensation for flooded lands, for payment for crop losses on uninsured crops and for the additional FSA county staff support that will be necessary to implement all of this in an effective and efficient manner.

The bottom line, in my view, is price. We need to address both, however—the long-term strategy of what to do about price, as well as the short-term cash flow crisis that we have in rural America.

I believe that the previous package which was adopted only in part took us a long ways in the right direction. The current package, which was announced this morning by the administration, by Senator DASCHLE and Senator HARKIN, I think moves us far beyond the debate that has taken place so far. It is far more constructive. It is far more helpful as we deal with this crisis in rural America.

I again applaud Senator DASCHLE's extraordinary leadership, the work of Senator HARKIN and other members of the Ag Committee, Secretary Glickman and the Clinton administration for focusing with this kind of intensity in a timely manner on what needs to be done relative to American agriculture this year; not next year, not 5 years down the road, but this year.

I am hopeful, again, that the conferees will evaluate this proposal with the greatest amount of care and earnestness, and that when we adjourn this coming October, we will, in fact, have addressed this issue in a bipartisan fashion and in a cost-efficient fashion in this body and that it will be on the President's desk and that the President will have an opportunity to sign ag disaster legislation which, in fact, is meaningful and timely and sufficient to get our family producers down the road into another productive year in the coming planting season.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield myself all of the time remaining on the Democratic side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR MURIEL HUMPHREY BROWN

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, Muriel Humphrey Brown was an outstanding woman, and all of us who knew her and had the opportunity to serve with her in the Senate mourn her loss today. The people of Minnesota have lost one of their finest public servants, and this country has lost one of its finest crusaders.

Muriel was an outstanding campaigner for her husband, Hubert Humphrey, who was a great Senator himself, and a great Vice President too. Together, they made an extraordinary team. She was the soft-spoken, gentle, guiding force behind Hubert's mayoral, Senatorial, Vice Presidential and Presidential campaigns. In fact, Muriel changed the rules of Presidential campaigning by becoming one of the first wives to speak out by herself on the Presidential campaign trail. Muriel's eloquence and wisdom could still be heard in recent days, as she celebrated the victory of her son, Skip, in the primary last week in his campaign to become the next Governor of Minnesota.

Muriel was an eloquent activist in her own right. She became the twelfth woman to serve in the U.S. Senate, when she was appointed in 1978 to complete the unexpired term of her husband. During her service in the Senate that year, Muriel's courage, wisdom, and ability enabled her to carry on the high ideals and important social programs of her husband.

She was an able leader on issues important to women, and her vigorous support for legislation to extend the deadline for States to ratify the equal rights amendment was a major step